

# Committees Congressional Handbook

## PUBLICATIONS

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### INTRODUCTION

Effective August 1, 1999, the following regulations of the Committee on House Administration, collectively known as the Committees' Congressional Handbook (Handbook), govern all expenditures from committee funds.

Committee funds are provided to pay ordinary and necessary expenses incurred by committee Members and employees in the United States, its territories, and possessions in support of official committee business, in accordance with the regulations contained in this Handbook.

The Handbook regulations are guidelines that assist Committee Chairs in determining whether expenses are reimbursable. Therefore, the Handbook contains broad descriptions of reimbursable expenses, but is not an exhaustive list of such expenses. The Handbook provides Committee Chairs with the authority and flexibility to manage the committee's budget.

As used in the Handbook, "ordinary and necessary" means reasonable expenditures in support of official committee business that are consistent with all applicable Federal laws, Rules of the House of Representatives, and regulations of the Committee on House Administration. The phrase "committee funds" means funds made available to a committee pursuant to primary and supplemental expense resolutions or allocated from the Reserve Fund.

Questions about reimbursement of an expense should be directed to the Committee on House Administration at x58281 prior to incurring the expense. Reimbursement will not be allowed for expenses that are specifically prohibited.

Routine administrative requests (requests for equipment, computer services, etc.) should be directed to the appropriate administrative offices under the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). For further information relating to any of the CAO's services, please refer to the CAO's Web site on the Intranet (<http://onlinecao.house.gov/>) or call First Call/One Call at x58000.

For all questions relating to equipment and equipment-related issues, refer to the User's Guide to Purchasing Equipment, Software and Related Services, available from the Committee on House Administration.

### COMMITTEE FUNDS

When an expense is incurred the Committee Chair must determine the primary purpose for the expenditure. Is the primary purpose for the expenditure official or is it related to personal, political, campaign, or Member office activities? Only official expenses the primary purpose of which are official and which are incurred in

accordance with the Handbook are reimbursable.

## **General**

All expenditures from committee funds are subject to the following general regulations:

1. Committee funds may only be used to support the conduct of official business of the committee. Committee funds may not be used to defray any personal, political or campaign-related expenses, or expenses related to a Member's personal office.
2. The Committee Chair is personally responsible for the payment of any official expenses incurred that exceeds the provided committee funds or is incurred but not reimbursable under these regulations.
3. No campaign resources may be used for official committee business.
4. The Committee Chair and Members of the committee may expend personal funds in support of official committee business. However, a Committee Chair or a Member of the committee may not expend personal funds to defray the committee's franked mail allocation.
5. Unless otherwise specifically provided by Federal laws, House Rules, or Committee on House Administration regulations, no Member of the committee, relative of a committee Member, or anyone with whom a committee Member has a professional or legal relationship may directly benefit from the expenditure of committee funds.
6. Committee funds are available for services provided and expenses incurred from January 3 of one year through January 2 of the following year. All expenses incurred will be charged to the funds available on the date the services were provided and the expenses were incurred.
7. Committee funds are not transferable between sessions.
8. Requests to obligate prior year's funds after January 2 of the succeeding year will be considered when a committee provides to the Committee on House Administration documentation demonstrating a bona fide intent to obligate the prior year funds during the applicable year.
9. At the beginning of a Congress, each committee is authorized a specific amount for franked mail which may not be used for other purposes. If the franked mail allocation is insufficient, additional funds provided to committees in the primary and supplemental expense resolutions may be transferred into a committee's franked mail account. Any funds so transferred may revert to use by the committee for other official purposes, if not spent on franked mail.

## **Biennial Funding**

Standing and Select Committees of the House, excluding the Appropriations

Committee, are funded on a biennial basis. At the beginning of each Congress, each committee must submit a budget request to the Committee on House Administration and introduce a primary expense resolution providing funds for the committee's activities for each session of that Congress.

The Committee on House Administration will provide each committee with forms and instructions for drafting a budget request and an expense resolution.

Once an expense resolution is introduced, the Chair of the committee requesting funds must submit an electronic and hard copy of the budget request with supporting documentation to the Committee on House Administration for consideration. The Chair and Ranking Minority Member of each committee will be invited to testify before the Committee on House Administration on behalf of the committee's budget request.

House Rule X, clause 7, provides for interim funding of committees for the period beginning on January 3 and ending at midnight on March 31 in each odd-numbered year. For each month during that period, committees are entitled to 9 percent (or such lesser percentage as may be determined by the Committee on House Administration) of the total annualized amount made available under expense resolution for such committees in the preceding session.

### **Disbursements and Disclosure**

Disbursements from committee funds are made on a reimbursable or direct payment basis and require specific documentation and Committee Chair certification as to accuracy and compliance with applicable federal laws, House Rules and Committee on House Administration regulations.

Reimbursement and payments from committee funds may be made only to Members and employees of the committee, consultants, detailing Government agencies, witnesses or vendors providing services to support the operation of the committee.

The Finance Office sends each committee monthly statements showing the year-to-date expenditures and obligated amounts. The quarterly expenditures reflected in these statements are compiled and published as the Quarterly Statement of Disbursements, which is a public document.

### **Monthly Reports**

Each committee must submit to the Committee on House Administration, by the 15th of each month, an original and two copies of a report signed by the Committee Chair on the activities of the committee during the preceding month. The monthly report must include the following:

- a. Summary of the progress of the specific investigations and studies for which funds were approved.
- b. Statement of expenses for the month and year to date. Committees must reconcile their figures with the Monthly Financial Statement prior to submitting the

monthly reports.

c. Report of travel performed.

d. List of committee employees, job titles and gross monthly salaries (a copy of the monthly Payroll Certification Form is acceptable).

e. Certification by the Chair of the reporting committee that the report is available to Members of the committee for examination.

Monthly reports for each committee will be available for public inspection at the Committee on House Administration.

### **Reserve Fund**

Pursuant to House Rule X, clause 6(a), "A primary expense resolution may include a reserve fund for unanticipated expenses of committees. An amount from such a reserve fund may be allocated to a committee only by approval of the Committee on House Administration."

Forms and instructions for drafting a reserve fund request are available from the Committee on House Administration upon request. The request for allocation from the reserve fund must come from the full Committee Chair. Prior to any action, the Committee on House Administration will present the request to the Speaker for approval.

Any funds allocated to a committee from the reserve fund may only be used to pay for expenses associated with the project for which the funds are requested. The funds may not be used to supplement the funds that were authorized in a committee's primary expense resolution.

Any additional staff positions allocated to a committee by the Speaker as part of a reserve fund request are temporary and, at the end of the project, a committee's staff ceiling will revert back to the original level. Committees are not guaranteed additional parking spaces for temporary staff.

The Chair and Ranking Minority Member of each committee requesting an allocation from the reserve fund will be invited to testify before the Committee on House Administration.

### **Biennial Activities Report**

House Rule XI, clause 1(d)(1) also requires that every committee, "submit to the House not later than January 2 of each odd-numbered year a report on the activities of that committee under this rule and rule X during the Congress ending at noon on January 3 of such year".

### **Committee Staff, Consultants and detailees**

## **General**

The Committee Chair determines the terms and conditions of employment for committee staff. These terms and conditions must be consistent with applicable federal laws and House Rules.

1. Personnel actions affecting employment positions in the House of Representatives must be free from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including marital or parental status), disability or age.
2. A committee may not retain an employee on the committee's payroll who does not perform duties commensurate with the compensation received for the offices of the employing authority (House Rule XXIV, clause 8(a)).
3. Annual rates of pay may not exceed the amount specified in the Speaker's Pay Order.
4. Total compensation in any month, including any lump sum payment and regular pay, may not exceed 1/12th of the maximum rate specified in the Speaker's Pay Order.
5. Retroactive salary adjustments are not authorized.
6. Government contributions to retirement, life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan and health benefits programs are not charged to the committee.
7. The Speaker sets a staff ceiling for each committee which may not be exceeded unless specifically authorized by the Speaker.

## **Contractor**

Committees may contract with firms or individuals only for general, non-legislative, office services (e.g. equipment maintenance, systems integration, data entry, staff training) for a specified limited period not to exceed a Congress. Contractors are not employees of the House and are ineligible for Government-provided benefits.

Contractors do not count against a committee's staff ceiling.

Committees are advised to consult the Committee on House Administration when entering into such contracts.

See Consultants (17), Educational Expenses (30), Interpreting and Translation Services (37), Temporary Agencies (8) and Websites (24).

## **Fellows**

Fellows perform services in a House office on a temporary basis as part of an established mid-career education program, while continuing to receive the usual compensation from his or her sponsoring employer. Fellows do not count against a committee's staff ceiling.

Committees must comply with the rules and regulations established by the

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct for fellows. Contact the Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103.

### **Interns**

Interns, paid or unpaid, must perform services for the committee as part of a demonstrated educational plan. Committee Chairs are responsible for determining the activities of committee interns.

Paid interns may work for no more than 120 days in a 12-month period and are not employees for purposes of compliance with the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Congressional Accountability Act. Paid interns are eligible for benefits.

Paid interns count against a committee's staff ceiling unless they earn no more than \$1,430 a month (\$17,160 annually). The Committee Chair must certify in a letter accompanying the Payroll Authorization Form that the intern meets the above criteria and must include "Intern" as the employee's job title.

In regards to unpaid interns, committees must comply with the rules and regulations established by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. Contact the Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103.

### **Replacement Employees**

A committee may hire a replacement for an employee on leave as may be made necessary by applicable law (e.g., Family Medical Leave Act, military service, jury duty, response to court order). The employee on leave continues to count against the committee's staff ceiling. The replacement employee does not count against the committee's staff ceiling.

The Committee Chair must certify in a letter accompanying the Payroll Authorization Form for the replacement employee the following:

- a. Name and job title of permanent employee
- b. Permanent employee leave status (e.g., FMLA, military service, jury duty)
- c. Permanent employee leave period
- d. Statement that the replacement employee will perform job duties of the employee on leave

### **Shared Employees**

An individual may be employed by more than one employing authority of the House of Representatives.

1. Shared employees must work out of the office of an employing authority, but are not required to work in the office of each employing authority.
2. The pay from each employing authority shall reflect the duties actually performed for each employing authority. The name, title, and pay of such an

individual will appear on each employing authority's Payroll Certification Form. Shared employees do count against the committee's staff ceiling.

3. Shared employees may not receive pay totaling more than the highest rate of basic pay in the Speaker's Pay Order applicable to the positions they occupy.

4. Employees may not be shared between a committee office and the office of an Officer of the House if the employee, in the course of duties for an Officer, has access to the financial information, payroll information, equipment account information, or information systems either of Member, committee or Leadership offices.

See General (6) and Dual Compensation (9).

### **Temporary Agencies**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to services provided by an individual employed by a temporary agency are reimbursable, if the following conditions are met:

1. Payment for such services is commensurate with the duties performed by the individual.

2. Such an individual remains an employee of the agency and is not eligible for pay, benefits, rights, or privileges available to House employees.

Such individuals count against the committee's staff ceiling, unless the individual is a replacement employee.

See Replacement Employees (7).

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers perform services in a House office without compensation from any source. The voluntary services should be of significant educational benefit to the volunteer and such assistance should not supplant the normal and regular duties of paid employees. Volunteers should be required to agree, in advance and in writing, to serve without compensation (31 USC § 1342 & Comp. Gen. Op. B69907).

Volunteers do not count against a committee's staff ceiling.

Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for guidelines for accepting services of volunteers.

## **Payroll**

### **General**

1. Committees are responsible for adhering to the minimum wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (\$5.15 per hour as of September 1, 1997) as made applicable by the Congressional Accountability Act. Interns are not employees for the purpose of compliance with minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair

Labor Standards Act.

2. As of January 1, 2001 , the Speaker's Pay Order is as follows:

- \$140,451 maximum annual rate.
- \$142,357 maximum annual rate for 9 employees, with three such employees to be designated by the Ranking Minority Member.
- \$143,600 maximum annual rate for 3 employees, with one such employee to be designated by the Ranking Minority Member.

3. The monthly payroll is based on a 30-day period. Payment is made on the last business day of the month, except for the month of December when payment is made on the 20th day of the month, or on the preceding business day when the 20th falls on a Saturday or Sunday (5 U.S.C. § 5505).

4. Each month, committees will receive a Payroll Certification Form from Human Resources that lists the annual salary and gross pay earned for each committee employee. The Committee Chair must certify the information and return the form to Human Resources no later than the 15th day of the month. If an employee is a relative of a current Member of Congress, the nature of the relationship must be noted on the Payroll Certification Form.

### **Appointment**

The appointment of committee employees requires the signature of the Committee Chair on the Payroll Authorization Form. Payroll Authorization Forms must be received by Human Resources no later than the last business day of the month in which the appointment is effective. Contact Human Resources for Payroll Authorization Forms at x52450.

### **Dual Compensation**

Aggregated gross annual salary for those receiving payment from the House who are also receiving payment from the U.S. Senate, Architect of the Capitol, or any other department or agency of the U.S. Government, may not exceed \$26,047 (1999) (5 U.S.C. § 5533).

### **Federal Civil Service Annuitant**

If a committee employs a Federal civil service annuitant, the amount of the annual annuity, when added to the annual rate of pay at which the employee is to be paid by the committee, may not exceed the highest rate of basic pay as authorized by the Speaker's Pay Order. The combined total of the Federal civil service annuity and the amount of the salary will be charged to the committee.

### **Lump Sum Payments**

A Committee Chair may authorize lump sum payments to employees of the committee (2 U.S.C. 60 o).

1. Payments must be consistent with House Rule XXIV, clause 8 (a), which requires that employees perform duties commensurate with the compensation received. Employees may not be compensated from public funds to perform non-official,

personal, political or campaign activities on behalf of the Member, the employee or anyone else.

2. Lump sum payments may not exceed the monthly pay of the employee receiving the lump sum payment

3. Lump sum payments may be for services performed during more than one month..

4. Total compensation in any one month, including lump sum payments and regular pay, may not exceed 1/12th of the maximum rate of pay specified in the Speaker's Pay Order.

5. Committee Chairs may provide lump sum payments for accrued annual leave only if such leave was accrued in accordance with written personnel policies established prior to the accrual of such leave.

6. Lump sum payments are considered as part of "rate of pay" under the Speaker's Pay Order.

7. Lump sum payments are considered "supplemental wages" for taxation.

8. Lump sum payments are not considered as part of "basic pay" for calculating Thrift Savings Plan, life insurance, and federal pensions.

9. Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for information on the treatment of lump sum payments with regard to financial disclosure, post-employment restrictions, and outside earned income limitations.

10. Lump Sum Payments will be disclosed separately in the Quarterly Statement of Disbursements.

### **Overtime Wage Rate Compensation**

Employees who are covered by the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (non-exempt) as made applicable by the Congressional Accountability Act, must be compensated at time -and- a-half for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours during any work week, either in pay or time-off during the same pay period, in accordance with consistently applied office personnel policies.

Overtime Pay Sheet forms must be received by Human Resources no later than the 15th day of the month following the month in which overtime wages were earned. Contact Human Resources at x52450 for the appropriate form.

For assistance in establishing overtime and time-off policies, contact the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075.

See Employment Law (11).

### **Pay Adjustments**

The Committee Chair may adjust, in any month, an employee's pay to reflect exceptional, meritorious, or less than satisfactory service. Adjustments must be received by Human Resources by the 15th of the month in which the adjustment is to be effective.

Retroactive pay adjustments are not authorized.

### **Terminations**

Terminations must be made on a Payroll Authorization Form and submitted to Human Resources as soon as the date of termination is known. If the termination notice is received by Human Resources after the 15th day of the month, the payroll check for that month may have already been processed. If an employee is overpaid, the committee is responsible for obtaining reimbursement.

### **Employment Law**

The Congressional Accountability Act

Pursuant to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995, Public Law 104-1, House employing offices are accountable under the following laws:

- a. Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938
- b. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- c. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- d. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- e. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993
- f. The Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988
- g. Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act
- h. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- i. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994
- j. Federal Service Labor-Management Relations
- k. The public service and accommodations provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- l. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

The Office of Compliance has published "A Guide to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995," which is available from the Office of Compliance, Room LA-200, John Adams Building, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540-1999, phone (202) 724-9250. The Office of Compliance also provides materials that

employing offices can use to notify employees of their rights and protections under the Congressional Accountability Act.

A Model Employee Handbook providing sample office policies to assist in developing an organization that complies with applicable laws and House Rules is available on the House Intranet Web Site: <http://intranet.house.gov>.

The Office of House Employment Counsel is available to provide legal advice and guidance with respect to employment matters generally and on establishing office policies consistent with applicable laws. Contact Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075.

### **Financial Disclosure**

Employees receiving basic pay of \$89,728 (1999) or greater for at least 60 days during any calendar year must file a Financial Disclosure Statement upon appointment, termination and annually. The annualized salary threshold is subject to change.

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred by employees in support of the filing of reports consistent with the provisions of the Ethics in Government Act are reimbursable.

Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for applicable rules.

### **Nepotism**

1. Under the federal statute prohibiting nepotism (5 U.S.C. § 3110) the term public official includes: a Member, an employee and any other individual, in whom is vested the authority by law, rule, or regulation, or to whom the authority has been delegated, to appoint, employ, promote, or advance individuals, or to recommend individuals for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement.

2. Such a public official may not appoint, employ, promote, advance or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in or to a position in the office in which that public official is serving or over which that public official exercises jurisdiction or control over any individual who is a relative of that public official.

3. Every employee must certify his or her relationship to any Member of Congress on a certificate of relationship form, available from Human Resources at x52450. If, at any time, the relationship of an employee to any current Member of Congress changes, the employee must file an amended certificate of relationship form. Completed certificates must be submitted to Human Resources, Chief Administrative Office (CAO) for retention in the employee's personnel files.

4. Individuals with the following relationship to the Chair or Ranking Minority Member of a committee or any of its subcommittees may not be employed by the committee:

- Aunt
- Half-sister

- Son-in-law
- Brother
- Husband
- Stepbrother
- Brother-in-law
- Mother
- Stepdaughter
- Daughter
- Mother-in-law
- Stepfather
- Daughter-in-law
- Nephew
- Stepmother
- Father
- Niece
- Stepsister
- Father-in-law
- Sister
- Stepson
- First cousin
- Sister-in-law
- Uncle
- Half-brother
- Son
- Wife

5. If a House employee becomes related to the Chair or Ranking Minority Member of the committee or any of its subcommittee (by marriage), the employee may remain on the personal or committee payroll. Similarly, if a Chair or Ranking Minority Member becomes the employing authority of a relative who was hired by someone else (e.g., the Member ascends to the Chairmanship of a committee or subcommittee for which the relative is already working) the relative may remain on the payroll. However, the Chair or Ranking Minority Member of the committee or any of its subcommittee may not then give that individual further promotions or raises, other than cost-of-living or other across-the-board adjustments.

6. The statute does not prohibit a Chair or Ranking Minority Member of the committee or any of its subcommittees from employing two individuals who are related to each other, but not to the Chair or Ranking Minority Member. (See, House Ethics Manual, pp. 187 and 188).

7. If an employee is related to a current Member of Congress, the nature of the relationship must be stated on the monthly Payroll Certification Form.

Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for additional information.

### **Non-Disclosure Oath**

House Rule XXIV, clause 13, requires a Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer or employee of the House to execute an oath of non-disclosure before having access to classified information.

### **Post-Employment Restriction**

Members and employees paid at an annual rate of \$102,525 (1999) or more for at least 60 days in the one-year period prior to termination are subject to post-employment restrictions. The restrictions on post-employment activities are outlined in the House Ethics Manual. Questions should be directed to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103.

### **Working from Home due to a Disability**

In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, a Committee Chair may reasonably accommodate a qualified employee with a disability by allowing the employee to work at home. As a condition of such a request, the Committee Chair may require certification from a physician of the need for such accommodation.

See Congressional Accountability Act (11) and Telecommuting (35).

### **Leave**

The Committee Chair determines the terms and conditions of employment, including provisions for leave (e.g. Annual, Administrative, and Sick) consistent with applicable Federal laws and House Rules. Contact the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075 for information about model leave policies.

### **Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**

A person employed by the House for at least one year and for a total of at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12-month period is entitled to up to a total of 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for the following family and medical reasons:

1. For the birth of a child and to care for a newborn child.
2. To adopt a child or to receive a child in foster care.
3. To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition.
4. For the employee's own serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job (29 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq.).

Employees on Family and Medical Leave remain eligible for all benefits.

### **Furlough**

Furlough is an absence without pay initiated by the Committee Chair. Placement in a Furlough status is at the discretion of the Committee Chair, unless statute otherwise requires placement in such status.

1. To be eligible an employee must have been employed by the committee for the entire month prior to the effective date of Furlough status.
2. An employee placed in a Furlough status continues to fill a committee position. The name of such committee employee will be listed on the monthly Payroll Certification Form.
3. Continuation of employee benefits while on furlough status:
  - a. Health benefits enrollment and coverage may be continued for up to 12 months. However, to maintain enrollment and coverage, an employee placed in a furlough status is responsible for the payment of the employee's portion of the insurance premium for the period of the furlough status, either by direct payment or by incurring a debt to the House.
  - b. Life insurance continues for up to 12 months without employee contribution.
  - c. Retirement coverage continues without employee contribution. Up to 6 months in a calendar year is credited for service in the annuity computation.
4. The placement of an employee in a Furlough status must be made on the form provided by Human Resources and received no later than the 15th day of the month in which the placement is to be effective.

Contact Human Resources at x52450 for such forms and additional information on employee benefits while on Furlough status.

### **Jury and Witness Duty**

Under 2 U.S.C. § 130b, the pay of an employee may not be reduced during a period of absence with respect to which the employee is summoned as a juror; or as a witness on behalf of any party in connection with any judicial proceeding to which the United States or a State or Local government is a party.

An employee may not receive fees for service as juror in a court of the United States or the District of Columbia; or as a witness on behalf of the United States or the District of Columbia. If an employee receives an amount (other than travel expenses) for service as a juror or witness in such a court, the employee must remit such amount to the Finance Office for deposit in the general fund of the Treasury.

### **Leave Without Pay (LWOP)**

LWOP is an absence without pay initiated by the employee subject to the approval of the Committee Chair, unless statute otherwise requires placement in such leave status.

1. To be eligible an employee must have been employed by the committee for the

entire month prior to the effective date of the LWOP status.

2. As a basic condition for approval of LWOP status, there should be a reasonable assurance that the employee will return to duty at the end of the LWOP period. Committee Chairs are encouraged to contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 prior to approving a LWOP status request to confirm that no conflict of interest issues exist.

3. LWOP status should be requested in advance of the period of absence.

4. LWOP status may not exceed 12 months in a 24-month period.

5. When an employee has been appointed to LWOP status, he or she continues to fill a payroll position. The name of such employees will be listed on the monthly Payroll Certification Form.

6. Continuation of Employee Benefits while on LWOP status:

a. Health benefits enrollment and coverage may be continued for up to 12 months. However, to maintain such enrollment and coverage, an employee placed in LWOP status is responsible for the payment of the employee's portion of the insurance premium for the period of the LWOP status, either by direct payment or by incurring a debt to the House.

b. Life insurance coverage continues for up to 12 months without employee contribution.

c. Retirement coverage continues without contribution. Up to 6 months in a calendar year is credited for service in the annuity computation.

7. The placement of an employee on LWOP status must be made on the Payroll Authorization Form and received no later than the 15th day of the month in which the placement is to be effective.

Contact Human Resources at x52450 for such forms and additional information on employee benefits while on LWOP status.

### **Military Leave**

Employees who are members of a National Guard or Armed Forces Reserves unit are entitled to leave without loss in pay, time, performance or efficiency rating for active duty or engaging in field or coast defense training as a Reserve of the Armed Forces or member of the National Guard. Leave accrues for an employee at the rate of 15 days per fiscal year and, to the extent that it is not used in a fiscal year, accumulates for use in the succeeding fiscal year until it totals 15 days at the beginning of a fiscal year (5 USC § 6323).

Contact the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075 for additional information on the rights, benefits, and obligations of individuals absent from employment for service in a uniformed service (38 U.S.C. § 4317 - 4319).

See Replacement Employees (7).

### **Consultants**

Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 72a(i) each committee is authorized, with the prior approval of the Committee on House Administration, to obtain temporary or intermittent services of individual consultants or organizations, to advise the committee with respect to matters within its jurisdiction.

1. The term of the contract agreement may not exceed 12 months or the end of a Congress, whichever occurs first.
2. The consultant is to act as an independent contractor and is not an employee of the committee. The Committee on House Administration will not approve a contract if the services to be provided by the consultant are the regular and normal duties of committee staff.
3. Individual contract agreements may not exceed the per diem equivalent of the highest gross rate of compensation that may be paid to a regular employee of the committee.
4. If the consultant receives federal retirement benefits during the term of the contract, the sum of all money paid to that consultant plus the federal retirement benefits for the calendar year may not exceed the maximum gross rate of annual compensation allowed for an employee of the committee.
5. A consultant may be reimbursed for the cost of transportation and travel-related expenses in accordance with the rates and regulations established for Members and employees of the committee. Consultants may travel at the government rate when traveling on official committee business.
6. Pursuant to clause 14(b) of House Rule XXIV, consultants are subject to certain provisions of the House Code of Official Conduct, including the gift rule, the prohibition against use of one's official position for private gain, and the requirement to conduct oneself at all times in a manner that reflects creditably on the House. For information relative to the House Rules, contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education at x57103 for further information.
7. Committee Chair must submit a letter requesting approval of the Committee on House Administration along with a signed contract agreement and resume of the proposed consultant, including, but not limited to, details of Federal Service either as an employee or pursuant to contract agreement with any committee of the Congress.
8. The letter must specify that the proposed contract has been approved by a majority of the Members of the committee and that no services pursuant to the proposed contract will commence prior to approval of the contract by the Committee on House Administration.

The Committee on House Administration will make available for public inspection a

copy of the qualifications of each consultant.

## **Detailees**

Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 72a(f), a committee may acquire on loan, with the prior written authorization of the Committee on House Administration, experts or other personnel from a Government department or agency.

1. Committee Chair must submit a letter to the Committee on House Administration requesting approval of the detailing agreement. The request must include the following:

a. Letter from the Committee Chair to the head of the particular Government department or agency explaining the need for the detail, the estimated period of the assignment, and the terms of reimbursement, if any, of the detail.

b. Written response from the Government department or agency agreeing to the detail request.

2. Detailing agreements may not exceed a 12-month period or the end of a Congress, whichever occurs first.

3. Committees are not required to reimburse for detailees, except for detailees from the Government Printing Office (GPO). Detailees assigned from GPO require full reimbursement from committee funds. The total number of non-reimbursable detailees, at one time, must remain at or below 10% of the committee's staff ceiling.

4. Detailees remain employees of the detailing department or agency, and are not employees of the House. Therefore, any travel by detailees will be undertaken pursuant to the authority of the detailing department or agency. Reimbursement of travel to the department or agency will be from committee funds and subject to the detailing agreement.

5. Personnel from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) may only be detailed to accompany an official committee delegation in the conduct of official committee business. CRS staff may only serve in a technical, nonpartisan capacity, and all travel costs are the responsibility of the committee.

6. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 734 the Comptroller General may assign or detail an officer or employee of the General Accounting Office to full-time continuous duty with a committee of Congress for not more than one year.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Advertisements**

#### **General**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related only to the following types of

advertisements are reimbursable:

- a. notice of committee employee and internship openings
- b. notice of official committee events (i.e., forums, field hearings)

Advertisements may not include the name, picture or likeness of any Member of the committee.

Advertisements must receive an Advisory Opinion from the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Franking Commission). Contact the Franking Commission at x59337.

### **Disclosure**

Committees must disclose, within the text of a television, radio and internet advertisement, the source of payment for the official advertisements. Committees may use any of the following:

- a. "Paid for with official funds from the Committee on [committee name]."
- b. "Paid for by funds authorized by the House of Representatives for the Committee on [committee name]."
- c. "Paid for by official funds authorized by the House of Representatives."

### **Internet**

Committees are authorized to purchase banner advertisement on Web pages. The banner advertisement may contain only text. The banner may link to a secondary page that contains only text relating to a category of authorized advertisement, and the secondary page may contain a link to the committee's home page.

### **Radio**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for a radio advertisement only announcing an official committee event (e.g., field hearing, forum) are reimbursable.

### **Television**

Ordinary and necessary expenses of a television advertisement only announcing an official committee event (e.g., field hearing, forum) are reimbursable. Television advertisements may only contain text and voiceover.

### **Booths**

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with renting or outfitting a booth to provide public information directly related to official committee business are reimbursable.

### **Electronic Communications**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the distribution of electronic

communications (e.g., the Internet, fax machines, etc.) are reimbursable.

## **Franked Mail**

### **Use of the Frank**

1. Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3210, committees are entitled to the privilege of sending mail as Franked mail in order to assist and expedite the conduct of official committee business. The content of committee mail must relate to the normal business of the committee. For information regarding the use of the Frank, refer to the Regulations on the Use of the Congressional Frank.

2. At the request of the Committee Chair, a separate mail accounting system can be provided to the minority of the committee.

3. Any mass mailing mailed by the committee that relates to normal and regular business of the committee may be mailed without regard to election year mass mailing cut off provisions.

4. Mail to be delivered outside the United States, its territories and possessions (other than mail matter bearing an APO or FPO address for delivery through the United States military mail system) is not eligible for distribution under the Frank and may be sent with stamps. In applicable circumstances, the committee may also use the following:

a. For official mail to U.S. Embassies and missions abroad, the Department of State provides diplomatic pouch service. For information regarding this service, contact House Postal Operations at x53856.

b. Committee hearings, reports and prints which are not available for purchase from the Government Printing Office, and which are to be sent to foreign countries, may be sent to the Library of Congress for forwarding through the Exchange and Gifts Division. For further information regarding this program, contact the Library of Congress, Exchange and Gifts Division at x75243.

Contact the Franking Commission at x59337 for additional information.

## **Franked Mail Monthly Statement**

Each month the United States Postal Service (USPS) will prepare an USPS Franked Mail Monthly Statement listing the postage expenses of all Franked mail incurred in that month. The USPS will forward this statement directly to Postal Operations for payment from the committee's franked mail allocation and will provide an informational copy to committees.

## **Inside Mail**

1. Inside mail is a delivery service for the transmittal of inter-office communications provided to congressional offices by House Postal Operations, pursuant to regulations established by the Committee on House Administration. Inside mail service is available among offices in the Capitol, the House and Senate Office Buildings, the Library of Congress, the White House, the State Department, and the

Social Security Administration.

2. Inside mail service is provided to support the conduct of official business of Members, committees, Officers of the House, and Congressional Staff Organizations.
3. Inside mail service may not be used to circulate letters that are personal or campaign related, or which constitute commercial advertising except when postage is paid for with personal expenses.
4. All mail to be delivered via inside mail should be clearly marked "Inside Mail" and deposited in an inside mailbox.
5. Authorized items for circulation of Inside Mail include:
  - a. A Dear Colleague or similar correspondence relating to the official business of the committee. This correspondence must be on official letterhead and signed by the Committee Chair, Ranking Minority Member, or Member(s) of the committee.
  - b. A position paper, report, legislative analysis, or any material published or produced by another individual or organization a committee wishes to circulate. This correspondence must be accompanied by a signed cover letter, on official letterhead, endorsing the material. A copy of the cover letter must be attached to each item to be distributed.
  - c. Franked Mail.
  - d. Stamped Mail.
  - e. Mail for which a delivery fee has been paid.
  - f. Mail in reusable blue U.S. House of Representatives inside mail envelope.
  - g. Mail produced by Congressional Staff Organizations registered with the Committee on House Administration.

Dear Colleague letters and similar correspondence are transmitted to House Postal Operations, in the appropriate quantity, with a cover letter signed by the Committee Chair, Ranking Minority Member, or committee Member, indicating to whom the mailing should be distributed. For information regarding the distribution figures and procedures, contact House Postal Operations at x53856.

### **Non-Franked Mail**

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred only when the Frank is insufficient, such as certified, registered, insured, express, foreign mail, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes related to the recovery of official items, are reimbursable. Postage may not be used in lieu of the frank. Such mailings must be in compliance with the Franking Regulations.

See Regulations on the Use of the Congressional Frank (available from the Franking Commission at x59337).

### **Printing and Production of Committee Publications**

Services required in support of the printing and production of committee hearings and prints are provided to each committee by the Government Printing Office (GPO). The following services are authorized pursuant to Title 44 of the U.S. Code:

- a. The printing of up to 150 copies of committee hearings or prints on matters germane to the committee's jurisdiction. Additional copies, the total cost of which does not exceed \$700, may be printed when authorized and approved by the Joint Committee on Printing. Any additional copies may be subject to the adoption of a House resolution authorizing such printing.
- b. The binding of a maximum of four sets (two sets each for the Majority and the Minority) of each committee publication for retention and permanent use by the committee.
- c. A committee may hire an individual or acquire a detailee on loan from GPO to provide assistance in support of the printing requirements of the committee. To request the detailing of a GPO employee, the Committee Chair should submit a request in writing to the Public Printer, c/o Congressional Printing and Management Division, GPO, Room C730, Washington, DC 20401.

See Detailees (18).

### **Stationery**

1. Official stationery (official committee letterhead, envelopes, roll call forms, etc.) is procured from the GPO (44 U.S.C. § 734). Contact the Congressional Printing and Management Division of GPO at (202) 512-0224 and the Office of Printing Services (OPS) at x51908 for stationery requests.

Official stationery may not contain the following information:

- a. Seals other than the Great Seal, Congressional Seal, or State Seal
  - b. Any Slogan
  - c. Private entity information or endorsement
  - d. Campaign contact information (e.g. address, phone number, e-mail address)
  - e. Greetings
2. Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the purchase of stationery (writing paper, press or news release letterhead, etc.) are reimbursable. Committees may purchase the stationery from OPS or an outside vendor.

3. Official stationery may be used only for a letter or other document the content of which complies with the Franking Regulations.

4. Ordinary and necessary expenses for business cards for committee employees are reimbursable. Cards must contain the name of the committee and accurately describe the position to which the employee has been appointed.

Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for guidelines on the use and appearance of official stationery. Contact the Franking Commission at x59337 for information on content of official correspondence.

## **Web Site Regulations**

### **General**

Web sites are a series of centrally maintained Web pages, accessible to the public via the Internet and stored on a specific host paid for with official funds. The home page is the first accessible page for that site.

1. Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with the creation and continued operation of Web sites in support of official committee business are reimbursable.

2. The minority and subcommittees shall be entitled to a separate page that is linked to and accessible only from the committee's Web page. For any Web pages created under this policy, the Chair (committee or subcommittee) or Ranking Minority Member (committee or subcommittee) responsible for its content must be identified on the introductory page.

3. Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain and may be maintained either by House Information Resources (HIR), the committee office, or a private vendor.

4. Committee Web sites may link to Member Web sites, but Member Web sites may not be located on Web sites paid for by committee funds.

5. HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives, prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither the committee nor the House is responsible for the content of linked sites. Committees maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

### **Content**

The content of a committee Web site may not:

a. Include personal, political, or campaign information.

b. Be directly linked or refer to Web sites created or operated by campaign or any campaign related entity, including political parties and campaign committees.

- c. Include grassroots lobbying or solicit support for a Member's position.
- d. Generate, circulate, solicit or encourage signing petitions.
- e. Include any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the Government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

#### Name (URL)

1. The URL name for an official Web site located in the HOUSE.GOV domain must be recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the committee.
2. The URL name may not be a slogan or imply in any manner that the House endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

#### Security

1. All House systems and devices with connections to the Internet must comply with network and security guidelines of the Committee on House Administration. These guidelines include the following:
  - a. Offices must send a written request for access to Internet services to HIR. Technical requirements will be provided to each office by HIR.
  - b. All users authorized access to the Internet must have unique identifiers and password security.
  - c. Users must immediately report any unauthorized access or unusual system activities to HIR Security Office (x66448). HIR will investigate any breaches of the Internet security system.
  - d. Internet access will be installed only after determination by HIR that anti-virus software has been installed on the committee's computer system.
2. Users with current anti-virus software provided by the House installed on in-office computers may download software, patches, and fixes. Users are responsible for complying with legal or contractual requirements from the owners of the software at least every six months.

#### **Disbursements**

##### **Advance Payments**

There are instances in which advance payments may be required and may be paid. Only the following advance payments are reimbursable, unless otherwise specifically authorized:

- a. Facility rentals

- b. Public information booth rental
- c. Educational expenses
- d. Newspaper and periodical subscriptions
- e. Original Equipment Manufacturers' Warranties
- f. Telecommunication devices

### **Reimbursement and Direct Payment**

Disbursements from funds available to committees are paid either on a reimbursement or direct payment basis and require the Committee Chair's signature, certifying that the expense was incurred in support of official committee business, and supporting documentation (i.e., receipt, invoice, etc.).

#### **Seeking Reimbursement: Vouchers**

Requests for reimbursement or payment from committee funds must be submitted on a completed voucher to the Finance Office.

Each voucher must include the following information:

1. Committee Chair's original signature.
2. Date(s) of service provided or date of purchase.
3. Payee (the party to whom the payment or reimbursement is being made) may be one of the following:
  - a. Committee Chair
  - b. Members and employees of the committee
  - c. Witnesses
  - d. Consultants
  - e. Government detailing agency
  - f. Designated vendor

For payment to individuals, the payee's tax identification number or Social Security number must be included on the voucher.

4. Description of the expenses incurred.

5. Supporting documentation (original invoices, original receipts, etc.).

6. Amount due.

Committees should provide the Finance Office with original receipts. If original receipts are unavailable, the Committee Chair may submit the voucher with the available documentation (e.g., copy of receipt or original credit card statement) with signed certification stating "I certify that this is a true copy. This is my only submission for payment."

In instances where original receipts are not provided (bus fares, pay phone calls, etc.) and for taxi fares under \$10.00, the information on the front of the voucher will be recognized as sufficient.

## **General Expenses**

### **Appliances**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for small appliances (microwaves, coffee makers, etc.) for use in the committee offices are reimbursable.

Any equipment that exceeds \$500 in value must be added to the committee's inventory. Contact Office Systems Management at x53994 to add such items to the inventory.

### **Clipping Services**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to clipping services (newspapers, periodicals, magazines, etc.) are reimbursable.

### **Decorating Expenses**

Decorations of nominal value (such as frames, bookends, flags, seals, etc.) for committee offices are reimbursable. Contact the Committee on House Administration for a list of Government agencies that provide wall decorations free of charge.

### **Drug Testing**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to drug testing, in accordance with the committee's written drug testing program, are reimbursable.

Offices should consult with the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075 when establishing drug-testing policies.

### **Dues**

Dues, membership fees, assessments, and annual fees are not reimbursable (5 USC § 5946).

## **Educational Expenses**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for Members or employees of the committee to attend conferences, seminars, briefings, and informational programs related to official committee business are reimbursable.

1. Reimbursement may not be made for expenses to attend educational programs in order to obtain a primary, secondary, graduate, post-graduate, or professional degree.

2. Expenses associated with acquiring or maintaining professional certification or licensing are not reimbursable.

See Advance Payments (27) and Contractors (6).

## **Employment-Related Expenses**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to filling employment vacancies are reimbursable. Transportation to and from employment interviews and relocation expenses upon acceptance or termination of employment are not reimbursable.

## **Equipment**

For all questions relating to equipment and equipment-related issues, refer to the User's Guide to Purchasing Equipment, Software and Related Services, available from the Committee on House Administration.

Routine administrative requests (requests for equipment, computer services, etc.) should be directed to the appropriate administrative offices under the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). For further information relating to any of the CAO's services, please refer to the CAO's Web site on the Intranet (<http://onlinecao.house.gov>) or call First Call/One Call at x58000.

## **Food and Beverage Expenses**

Members and employees of a committee may be reimbursed for food and beverage expenses incidental to an official meeting that includes persons who are not Members or employees of the House.

Members and employees of a committee may not be reimbursed for food and beverage expenses related to social activities or social events (e.g. receptions, entertainment, holiday or personal celebrations, etc.).

The cost of alcoholic beverages is not reimbursable under any circumstances.

See Representational Funds (34).

## **Framing**

Framing services for items to be displayed in the committee offices are reimbursable. When committees use the in-House framing service provided by the Furniture Resource Center at x62421, charges will be automatically debited from committee funds.

## **Furnishings**

Furniture, carpet, drapes, etc. for committee offices are supplied and maintained by the CAO through the Furniture Resource Center, without charge to the committee.

## **Incidental Use**

Incidental personal use of equipment and supplies owned or leased by, or the cost of which is reimbursed by, the House of Representatives is permitted only when such use is negligible in nature, frequency, time consumed, and expense.

For example, limited use of government resources to access the Internet, to send or receive personal e-mail, or to make personal phone calls is permissible, so long as the use meets the above criteria, and otherwise conforms with the Regulations of the Committee on House Administration and the Code of Official Conduct (House Rule XXIV).

A Member office may adopt a more restrictive incidental use policy.

## **Interpreting and Translating Services**

See Interpreting and Translating Services (37).

## **Late Fees**

Ordinary and necessary fees related to late payments incurred beyond the control of a Member or employee of the committee are reimbursable.

## **Mass Transit Benefit**

Each office is authorized to provide to its qualified employees a transit fare benefit of a value not to exceed \$21 per month on a qualified mass transit system. Each office may establish a salary limit for participation in this program. This transit fare may only be used by qualified employees for travel to and from their official place of work.

Employees may not simultaneously use a House parking permit and receive the mass transit benefit. Contact the First Call / One Call at x58000 for information related to this program.

## **Messenger Services**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for messenger services related to official committee business are reimbursable.

### **Parking**

1. A committee is provided parking permits for up to 80% of the committee staff level. Of the permits provided, 60% are indoor garage spaces and 40% are for outdoor lot spaces.

a. Garage parking spaces may be reserved. If space is reserved, the permit holder incurs additional taxable income as a working condition fringe benefit. Under the tax code and IRS regulations, Members and employees have imputed taxable income to the extent that the fair market value of Government-provided parking exceeds \$175.00/month (the value of the parking space is subject to future adjustments).

b. When a garage space is reserved, the Director of Garages and Parking Security will notify Human Resources.

c. Contact Human Resources at x52450 to make appropriate tax withholdings.

2. At the beginning of each Congress, the Director of Garages and Parking Security will send parking permit application forms to each committee. The Committee Chair should designate on the forms to who garage or outside parking space permits are to be issued, and with regard to garage space, whether the space is to be assigned on a reserved or unreserved basis. The application forms must include the individual's name, House of Representatives ID number (where applicable), the model, year and color of the individual's automobile, and the automobile license number and state.

3. All offices must retrieve parking permits from departing employees. Additionally, offices must notify House Garages and Parking Security of any transfers or changes in permit assignments. Notifications should be in writing on official letterhead and include Committee Chair's signature.

4. The House of Representatives will not be liable for any damage caused to or theft of any motor vehicle or contents thereof while parked on a House parking lot when that lot is not attended.

Contact the Committee on House Administration at x58281 for more details regarding the parking policy.

## **Photography Expenses**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for photographic services related to official committee business are reimbursable. An in-House source is the Office of Photography at x52840.

## **Publications**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to purchasing or subscribing to publications, including but not limited to research materials, reference books, informational brochures or periodicals, for official committee business use are reimbursable.

All invoices for subscriptions received by the Finance Office through January 2 will be processed using funds from that session, including subscriptions for service dates in the following session. Beginning on January 3, all subscriptions must be processed with the funds available on the beginning date of the subscription.

## **Records Maintenance and Archiving**

1. House Rule XI, clause 2 (e) requires that each committee keep a complete record of all committee actions, including, but not limited to, the following:

- roll call votes
- committee publications (e.g., committee hearings, committee prints, legislative calendars)
- transcripts of unprinted hearings

2. For detailed information regarding archiving, contact the Legislative Resource Center at x51300 for a copy of Archiving Committee Records for Committees of the U.S. House of Representatives: A Handbook of Archival Practices and Procedures.

3. House Rule VII requires that at the close of each Congress, the Clerk shall obtain all non-current records of each committee and transfer them to the National Archives for preservation subject to the order of the House. The Clerk will provide, at the close of each Congress, each committee with the necessary instructions and forms to be used in retiring the committee's records to the Office of Records and Registration for transfer to the National Archives.

4. Archived records may be retrieved, when necessary, upon request submitted by authorized committee staff to the Office of Records and Registration. The Committee Chair must provide to the Clerk a list of staff authorized to request the retrieval of archived records.

## **Representational Funds**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the purchase of items for official presentation when on official travel for the House outside the United States, its territories and possessions is reimbursable. Food and beverage expenses and the purchase of items for official presentation in connection with visits to the United States by foreign heads of State and other foreign officials are reimbursable.

To purchase items from the House Gift Shop, select the item(s) and notify the sales clerk that it is for official committee business. Receipts for such items should be vouchered and must be supported by a listing of the name, title or position, and country represented of all individuals attending the event and/or to whom an official presentation is made.

### **Specialized Training**

Each committee is authorized, with the approval of the Committee on House Administration, to provide assistance to employees of the committee in obtaining specialized training, whenever that committee determines that such training will aid the committee in the discharge of its responsibilities.

1. Such assistance may be in the form of continuance of pay during the periods of training, or grants of funds to pay tuition or other expenses of training, or both.
2. Committees must obtain reasonable assurance from the employee of his or her intent to return to work so that the employee may convey the benefits of such training upon the committee.

The Committee Chair must submit a letter to the Committee on House Administration, prior to any expenses being incurred, explaining the need for the specialized training, the cost, the duration, and any other pertinent information.

### **Supplies**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for office supplies in support of the conduct of official committee business are reimbursable. Supplies may be procured through Office Supply Store (OSS) located in B-217 Longworth or through an outside vendor.

OSS issues each committee an Account Card. The cost of all items purchased with the Account Card is charged directly to committee funds. Committee Chairs may request additional account cards for use by subcommittees and the minority.

Each month, OSS will provide each committee with a statement of all transactions charged to the committee's account card(s). Committees should reconcile their records with this statement to ensure accuracy. Discrepancies should be resolved immediately with OSS.

OSS also operates a gift shop in B-217A Longworth which sells souvenirs and mementos to Members, employees and the public. Committee Account Card(s) may not be used to purchase items at the Gift Shop.

For information regarding special orders, deliveries and monthly statements, contact OSS at x53321.

See Representational Funds (34).

## **Telecommunications**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the official use, including periodic or flat service fees, of telecommunications lines (voice and data) in the residence of Members and employees of the committee are reimbursable. The cost of installation of such lines is not reimbursable.

## **TELECOMMUTING**

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in compliance with the Committee on House Administration telecommuting policy are reimbursable. Offices may obtain a copy of the Telecommuting policy and agreement from the Committee's website at (<http://www.house.gov/cha/publications/publications.html>).

## **Hearings and Meetings**

Committees must adhere to House Rules with respect to preparing for and holding hearings, mark-ups and meetings.

Notices of committee hearings and meetings should include a contact person to arrange for accommodations for persons with disabilities. For suggested language and assistance in meeting accommodations, contact the Office of ADA Services at x53005.

## **Audio and Video Expenses**

Ordinary and necessary expenses including but not limited to the following, are reimbursable:

- a. Audio and video taping of meetings and hearings.
- b. Audio and video dissemination of committee meetings and hearings.
- c. Video teleconferencing for official committee business.

Except for notices of official committee events, the costs related to purchasing television broadcast time are not reimbursable.

Note: In Washington, Communications Media, an in-House source for audio and video services, is available. Contact Communications Media at x53941 for information on services, charges and availability.

## **Charts / Presentation Materials**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for the production of charts or other materials for official committee business are reimbursable. Committees may use the in-House service, House Information Resources (HIR), or an outside vendor for the production of charts. Contact HIR at x63799 for services and charges.

## **Field Hearings**

### **Procurement of Rental Space**

Committees are authorized to procure commercial space when federal, state, municipal or other public space is not available or not suitable.

### **Insurance for Rental Space**

Committees may be asked to provide a certificate of insurance for the purpose of entering into a lease for securing space for a field hearing or other official events. The House does not carry a private insurance policy and generally does not permit the use of committee funds to pay for a private insurance policy.

Under the provisions of the Federal Tort Claims Act (28 U.S.C. § 2671-2680), the United States acts as a self-insurer and recognizes its liability for the negligent and wrongful acts or omissions of its employees acting within the scope of their official duties. The United States is liable to the same extent an individual would be in like circumstances.

Although the Federal Tort Claims Act is not the equivalent of private liability insurance, it does provide an aggrieved party with administrative recourse, and if that proves unsatisfactory, it provides legal recourse for damage or injury sustained. Thus, to the extent negligent acts of congressional employees, while conducting official duties, result in either property damage or bodily injury, such damage or injury should be compensable under the Act in a manner which affords protection similar to private liability insurance.

However, if the provisions of the Federal Tort Claims Act are not considered adequate, the ordinary and necessary expenses for liability insurance to cover these risks are reimbursable. When a compensable event occurs, the deductible portion of a policy may be paid from committee funds.

Expenses for the purchase of fire and theft insurance are not reimbursable.

For advice and guidance regarding the Federal Tort Claims Act, contact the Office of the General Counsel at x59700.

## **Interpreting and Translating Services**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to procuring interpreting and translating services needed in conducting official committee business are reimbursable.

The Office of ADA Services (x53005) can assist committees in locating sign language interpreters for the public attending committee meetings and hearings.

The Congressional Special Services Office (x44048) will provide free interpreting services for hearing-impaired witnesses testifying before a committee in Washington, DC.

## **Stenographic Reporters**

All transcription services covering a hearing, mark-up or other bipartisan meeting of Members of the committee called by the Chair of a committee or subcommittee, must be arranged through the Office of Official Reporters to Committees. Such transcription services are provided at no cost to committees.

1. For field hearings, the Official Reporters will either send an official reporter or arrange for a stenographic reporter from a commercial firm at the location of the field hearing. If an official reporter is assigned to cover a field hearing, travel expenses of the official reporter will be paid for by the Office of the Clerk.
2. When in-house stenographic reporters are not available, the Office of Official Reporters to Committees will arrange for an outside vendor. The vendor will submit to the committee a completed voucher along with a copy of the hearing transcript. The Committee Chair must sign the voucher and forward to the Office of Official Reporters to Committees for processing. There is no cost to committees.
3. The Committee Chair may authorize the use of an outside stenographic reporter, at direct cost to the committee, for meetings other than those that the Office of Official Reporters to Committees is required to cover. All expenses related to these services will be paid from committee funds. The invoice from the vendor should be vouchered directly to the Finance Office for payment.

Contact the Office of Official Reporters to Committees at x52627 for information on how to request a stenographic reporter.

## **Witnesses**

The reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by a witness is an extraordinary measure.

Reimbursement will be made only when authorized by the Committee Chair. Reimbursement will be made only to an individual called to appear as a witness before a duly constituted meeting or hearing under House Rules or a duly constituted staff deposition.

Witnesses may travel at the government rate when the committee is reimbursing for travel expenses.

If a witness is a minor or requires medical assistance, reimbursement may be made to the parent or guardian of the minor or nurse or aide accompanying the witness.

If a witness resides outside the United States, its territories and possessions, reimbursement may be made to the witness for transportation expenses to and from the United States.

## **Travel**

Travel in support of official committee business, is official travel. Official travel includes local travel and being away from home overnight when returning to the

primary duty station is unduly burdensome or impractical.

The Committee Chair must approve all official travel. The Committee Chair may establish internal committee procedures for authorization of travel.

## **Domestic Travel**

### **General**

1. Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with official travel, including transportation, lodging, meals (excluding alcohol), and incidentals (parking, ticket change fees, etc.) are reimbursable.
2. Only Members and employees of the committee, consultants, vendors and witnesses may be reimbursed from committee funds for travel expenses (unless otherwise authorized, in writing, by the Speaker).
3. Any travel by detailees will be undertaken pursuant to the authority of the detailing department or agency. Reimbursement of travel to the department or agency will be from committee funds and subject to the detailing agreement.
4. Official travel may not be for personal, political, campaign or Member personal office purposes.
5. Official travel cannot originate from or terminate at a political or campaign event. Official travel may not be combined with or related to travel or travel related expenses paid for with campaign funds.
6. Living and commuting expenses are not reimbursable. Living expenses are meals, housing, and other personal expenses incurred at a committee Member or employee's residence or primary duty station. Commuting expenses are transportation expenses incurred by the Members or employees between their residence and primary duty station.
7. Official travel may not exceed 60 consecutive days.
8. Only ordinary and necessary charges associated with failure to cancel reservations incurred beyond the control of the Members and employees of the committee are reimbursable.
9. The cost of alcoholic beverages is not reimbursable.
10. The Committee on House Administration encourages committees to establish a limit on reimbursement of travel related expenses and suggests the use of the locality based per diem rates as a guideline. The locality based per diem rates are located on the General Services Administration Web page at <http://www.gsa.gov/search.htm>.
11. No Member of the committee may be reimbursed for transportation or travel-related expenses after the date of the general election in which the Member has not been elected to the succeeding Congress, or in the case of a Member who is not a

candidate in such general election, the earlier of the date of such general election or after the adjournment sine die of the last regular session of the Congress (House Rule XXV, clause 10).

#### Combined Travel (Personal and Official)

Combined travel is travel by a Member or employee of the committee for the primary purpose of official committee business that includes an intervening destination or additional time period for personal purposes.

Combined travel requires that:

- a) the primary purpose of the travel must be official
- b) the personal segment of the combined travel may not be purchased at the government rate or purchased with a Government Travel Card.
- c) the traveler seeks reimbursement for either the government rate of the direct route and means to the destination required for official committee business, or the actually traveled fare, whichever is less;
- d) the traveler personally pays any additional expenses incurred as a result of the personal travel
- e) the traveler attaches a brief memo to the voucher submitted for combined travel, stating that the official travel and personal travel was combined for personal convenience

#### Unexpected Travel

Travel expenses are reimbursable in the event that unexpected official business requires Members or employees of the committee to travel to Washington, D.C. or location of official committee business from a location within the United States, its territories and possessions. Travel to and from campaign or other political activities is not reimbursable. Travel may be booked at the government rate.

Committee funds may be used to return committee Members and employees to a location for personal business after fulfilling their official duties.

#### Methods of Travel

Subject to these travel regulations, all official travel by way of common carrier, chartered, leased, or privately-owned vehicle (airplane, automobile, etc.) is reimbursable.

#### Chartered Aircraft

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to chartering an aircraft are reimbursable when passengers are restricted to Members, their immediate family (spouse, child, parent) and employees of the committee, the names of whom must be stated on the voucher.

The full cost of the chartered aircraft must be paid for by committee funds.

If an immediate family member is a passenger, the Member must submit a check to the Finance Office payable to the US Treasury equivalent to the cost of a comparable commercial first class fare with an explanatory letter.

#### Corporate or Private Aircraft

Members and employees of the committee who travel via corporate, business or privately owned aircraft in support of the conduct of official committee business must reimburse the entity providing the flight for the fair market value of the flight. To determine the fair market value of such a flight, apply the following:

- a. When the travel is via a previously or regularly scheduled flight by the corporation for its business, or individual, the entity must be reimbursed based on the cost of a commercial first class flight to the nearest location served by a commercial passenger airline. If only standard (coach) rates are available at the nearest location, the committee must reimburse the entity for the standard (coach) rate.
- b. When the flight is scheduled specifically for committee use, payment will be made based on the cost of an equivalent commercial chartered flight to that location.

Prior to scheduling travel provided by any corporation, business, or individual, the committee must verify that the person has the authority under its FAA certification to accept payment for travel as set forth above. Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for guidance.

#### Department of Defense

The Department of Defense will support approved travel of Members and employees of the Congress upon request of the Congress, pursuant to law or where necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense Directive number 4515.12 prescribes the policy of the Department of Defense with respect to support for travel of Members and employees of Congress. For additional information, contact the Congressional Liaison Office of any branch of the Armed Services.

#### Officially Leased Vehicle

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the short-term lease of a vehicle in support of the conduct of official business are reimbursable.

1. Non-governmental use of a vehicle may be made only when such use is:
  - a) during the course of and generally along the route of the day's official itinerary
  - b) incidental to the day's official committee business
  - c) de minimis in nature, frequency, and time consumed

d) does not otherwise constitute a significant activity or event

2. The Committee recommends that cars be rented at the government rate with unlimited mileage and full and comprehensive collision damage waiver (CDW) coverage. Not all rental car franchises include CDW coverage with the government rate. To ensure CDW coverage, offices should make their rental car reservations through the Combined Airline Ticket Office (CATO). CATO is located at B-222 Longworth, (703) 522-2286.

3. If the government rate is unavailable or the government rate does not include CDW coverage, the cost for CDW coverage is reimbursable.

3. Personal accident insurance, personal effects coverage, and equivalent insurance policies are not reimbursable.

4. Security deposits, advance payments, termination fees, traffic violations, etc., are not reimbursable.

If an employee on official business is involved in an accident with a rental car, notify the Office of General Counsel at x59700.

#### Privately Owned or Leased Vehicle

Mileage incurred via a privately-owned or privately-leased vehicle while on official business is reimbursable on a rate per mile basis. The maximum rates per mile are (rates are subject to change):

Automobile: \$ .31

Motorcycle: \$ .25

Airplane: \$ .85

Only mileage for use of an aircraft that is privately owned by either a Member or employee of the committee is reimbursable.

See Corporate or Private Aircraft (41).

#### Travel Expenses

The Committee on House Administration strongly recommends that committees submit their vouchers for travel reimbursement at least fifteen days before the payment due date to assist the Finance Office in providing timely reimbursements and prevent committee Members and employees from incurring late fees or delinquency problems.

#### Government Rate

Government rates are available to Members and employees of the committee to support the conduct of official travel. To be eligible for government rates when scheduling official travel, Members and employees of the committee may present:

- a. Government Travel Charge card
- b. Government Travel Cardless Account
- c. Government Travel Request form
- d. Official Travel Authorization coupon

Contact the Finance Office at x56514 for account information and forms.

#### Government Travel Card

1. The Government travel card is available for Member and employee use for official travel and travel-related expenses. Such travel expenses incurred on this or any other credit/charge card, are directly reimbursable to the traveler or to the cardholder with a copy of the credit card statement, an accompanying voucher, and applicable receipts.
2. Each Government travel card is individually issued, and each employee to whom the card is issued is personally liable for making payments on the card and remaining current on any unpaid balance.
3. When reimbursement is to be made to the cardholder for expenses incurred by someone other than the cardholder, the description of services stated on the voucher must clearly identify the traveler and the expense incurred.
4. The Government travel card is for official travel purposes only and may be used by the cardholder only. Use of the card for any personal or non-official purchases is prohibited. The cardholder may use the card to purchase travel-related services (airline tickets, hotel expenses, etc.) for other authorized travelers, although the vendor does not encourage this practice.
5. The Finance Office will monitor the monthly aging report received from the vendor and alert offices of delinquencies. The Finance Office will not intervene with the vendor in the event of a delinquency.

#### Government Travel Cardless Accounts

1. The Government travel cardless account is available for committees to use to purchase airline tickets through CATO.
2. The Committee Chair must appoint an employee of the committee to act as manager of the account and specify which employees are authorized to use the account.
3. Reimbursement for expenses incurred with the cardless account is made directly to the credit card company. Committees must submit the original credit card statement and airline ticket receipt to the Finance Office along with the voucher.

#### Shared Travel Expenses

Official travel expenses may be shared by more than one committee office or with a Member office. The division of costs must accurately reflect the expenses incurred

by each office.

#### Travel Promotional Awards

Free travel, mileage, discounts, upgrades, coupons, etc. accrued by Members or employees as a result of official travel awarded at the sole discretion of the company as a promotional award, may be used at the discretion of the Members and employees of the committee. The Committee on House Administration encourages the official use of these travel awards whenever practicable.

### **Foreign Travel**

The authority to incur expenses for foreign travel is contained in the House Rule X, clause 8, 22 U.S.C. § 1754, and in other provisions of law.

#### General

1. Travel is coordinated through the State Department Travel Office. The State Department will issue a Government Travel Request form that is processed through CATO. Each committee should obtain a copy of the State Department's "Guide to Official Foreign Travel" for information concerning what paperwork is required. For other travel questions regarding arrangements, contact the State Department at (202) 647-1882. Information regarding per diem while on foreign travel is located at [www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html).

2. Members and employees should use American carriers whenever possible, unless such service is not reasonably available.

3. No appropriated moneys or local currencies owned by the United States may be used to pay foreign travel expenses of committee Members after the date of the general election in which the Member has not been elected to the succeeding Congress, or in the case of a Member who is not a candidate in such general election, the earlier of the date of such general election or the adjournment sine die of the last regular session of the Congress (House Rule XXV, clause 10).

#### Authorization

##### Speaker of the House

The Speaker has the authority to designate any Member or employee of the House to travel on business of the House outside the United States, its territories and possessions (22 USCS § 1754 (b)(1)(B) and House Rule I, clause 10).

##### Committee Chair

Committee Chairs have the authority to designate any Member or employee of the committee to travel on official committee business, outside the United States, its territories and possessions (22 U.S.C. § 1754 (b)(1)(B)).

#### Foreign Travel Reports

##### Individuals

House Rule X, clause 8(b)(3) requires each Member and employee who performs official foreign travel to submit, no later than 60 days following the completion of travel, an itemized report to the Committee Chair under whose authority the travel was performed. The report should contain the dates each country was visited, the amount of per diem furnished, the cost of transportation furnished, other funds

expended for official purposes and summarize in these categories the total foreign currencies and/or appropriated funds expended.

#### Committee Chair

22 U.S.C. §1754 (b)(2) requires the Chair of each committee, on a quarterly basis, to prepare a consolidated report of amounts expended for foreign travel by each Member and employee of the committee. The report should include the amounts expended in foreign currency (in dollar equivalent values), amounts expended in appropriated funds, the purpose of each expenditure (including per diem and transportation), and the total itemized expenditure by each Member or employee of the committee.

The Clerk of the House will provide each committee with a "Report of Expenditures for Official Foreign Travel" form that must be completed, signed, and returned to the Clerk of the House. The report will be published in the Congressional Record and be open to public inspection at the Legislative Resource Center at x51300.

#### Speaker Authorized Travel

22 U.S.C. § 1754 (b)(3)(A) requires each individual authorized by the Speaker to travel outside the United States to file a report with the Clerk of the House within 30 days after the completion of the travel. The report should include the amounts expended in foreign currency (in dollar equivalent values), amounts expended in appropriated funds, the purpose of each expenditure (including per diem and transportation), and the total itemized expenditure.

For groups authorized by the Speaker, the Chairman or if there is no designated Chairman, the ranking Member or senior employee of the group, is required to submit a report for all Members of the group.

The report will be published in the Congressional Record and be open to public inspection at the Legislative Resource Center at x51300.

#### Interparliamentary Group or Delegation

22 U.S.C. § 276c-1 requires each Committee Chair or senior Member of an interparliamentary group or delegation traveling outside the United States to submit an itemized report to the Chair of the Committee on International Relations. The report must include all expenditures made by, or on behalf of each Member or employee of the group, and the purpose of the expenditures, including per diem (lodging and meals), transportation and other expenditures. The report must be completed before the end of the session in which the travel occurred. Contact the Committee on International Relations at x55021 for additional information.

The Chair of the Committee on International Relations will, within sixty days after the beginning of each regular session of Congress, prepare a consolidated report with respect to each group that has submitted a report. The consolidated report will be filed with the Committee on House Administration and shall be open to public inspection at the Legislative Resource Center at x51300.

#### Amending Travel Reports

Miscellaneous travel expenses (i.e., receptions, ground transportation, security) recognized subsequent to submission of the original foreign travel report should be

reported to the Clerk of the House in the form of an amended report.

#### Foreign Gifts and Decorations Report

5 U.S.C. § 7342 requires each Member or employee who has accepted a tangible gift or decoration of more than minimal value (\$260), or a gift of travel or expenses of travel taking place entirely outside the United States, its territories or possessions, tendered by a foreign government, to file a report with the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct within 30 days after the acceptance of the gift, decoration or travel. The report will be open to public inspection at the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Office of Advice and Education, at x57103 for the applicable forms.